

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows:

Replace the paragraph on page 9, between lines 9-19 of the specification with the following:

The wet cast bodies were dried in ambient air for 2 days and then annealed at 800°C. in air to remove the organic additives. During sintering in air for 2 h at 1340°C. the relative density of the ZrO<sub>2</sub>-doped samples was increased to 97%, whereas without ZrO<sub>2</sub> a lower temperature of 1290°C. was sufficient to obtain a closed porosity at a density of 96%. A final density of >99.9% was achieved by hot isostatic pressing (HIP) in argon at 1300°C/12 hours for the ZrO<sub>2</sub>-doped material. Without ZrO<sub>2</sub> doping the HIP conditions were 1200°C/12 h. The average crystal sizes of the transparent corundum microstructures are given by Tab. IV, showing optical data of MgO-doped Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> samples (0.03% MgO), some of them co-doped with zirconia, after HIP and after annealing. After annealing at 1350°C, only the microstructures without ZrO<sub>2</sub> exhibit some larger crystals i.e. >1.3 µm. The particle sizes of most of the ZrO<sub>2</sub> crystals after HIP range between 30 and 100 nm where, for example, the ZrO<sub>2</sub> dopant has an average particle size of at most 100 nm.